



South Dakota Department of the Military South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



CIVIL WAR MONUMENT TO BE REDEDICATED

The Civil War Monument, located on the "triangle" east of Capitol Lake in Pierre, will be rededicated 95 years to the day after its original dedication on Monday, June 1, at 11 a.m. CDT.

The Capitol Complex Restoration and Beautification Commission approved various upgrades to the Civil War Monument site, including sidewalks, lighting, benches, landscaping and a flagpole.

Two interpretive signs highlighting the Civil War Monument itself and the history of the South Dakota Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) were installed at the monument site, with the help of the South Dakota State Historical Society.

The rededication event will consist of a re-enactment of the June 1, 1920, dedication ceremony, followed by a few remarks from Gov. Dennis Daugaard. Gov. Daugaard will read the statement made in June 1920 by then-Gov. Peter Norbeck. Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Larry Zimmerman will read the remarks of National GAR Commander-In-Chief Daniel Hall of Columbus, Ohio.

The Civil War Monument was the first war monument on the State Capitol grounds.



Original dedication ceremony of the Civil War Monument on June 1.

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SDNG RECOGNIZES BHSU ATHLETES FOR MILITARY SERVICE

The South Dakota Army National Guard recognized two Black Hills State University athletes during an athletic awards banquet at the Donald E. Young Center, April 28.

Spc. Rebecca Green, a Yellow Jacket softball player, and Sgt. Luke Whalen, a receiver on the Yellow Jacket football team, are both members of the 842nd Engineer Company and received the BHSU Soldier Athlete Award for putting their athletic careers on hold to serve their country.

During Green's second year at BHSU, she made the decision to join the SDARNG and in September 2011, enlisted as a unit supply specialist.

"I joined the National Guard for not only money for school, but to become more of a role model for my nieces and nephews," said Green, of Rapid City. "I am a coach, so being a role model for the kiddos. It's good to be someone they can look up to and trust."

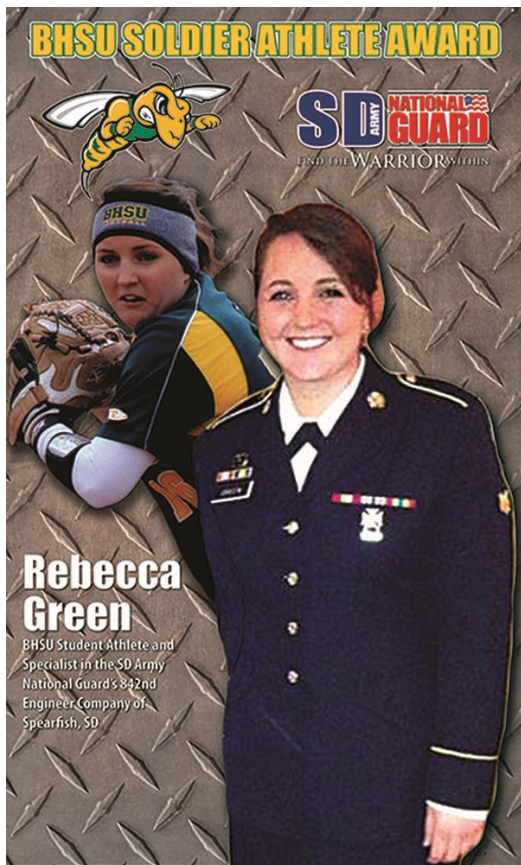
Enlisting in the National Guard required Green to temporarily stop playing softball to attend basic training (10 weeks) and advanced individual training (eight weeks).

"Overall, it has worked out," said Green. "I'm incredibly happy to do both. The National Guard has advanced my softball career enormously as I've become a better leader, more outspoken and I work better with people now."

Those traits are reflected in her softball statistics. "Two of her better years as a softball player were after she returned from military training," said Coach Lane Leedy. "I have a tremendous amount of respect for what she has accomplished. She came back from training a better athlete with a sounder mind." Becky tallied seven home runs and 47 RBIs throughout her Yellow Jacket career and hit a career best .488 slugging percentage during her senior season. She was recognized as a two-time Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference All-Academic Team honoree (2014 and 2015).

"Spc. Green is the epitome of a team player and her desire to succeed makes her a true asset to the South Dakota Army National Guard," said Staff Sgt. Anson Juelfs, Green's squad leader.

She will graduate with a Bachelor of Science in elementary education with honors in May.



(continued)

SDNG RECOGNIZES BHSU ATHLETES FOR MILITARY SERVICE (CONTINUED)

Whalen enlisted into SDARNG in 2008 as a heavy construction equipment operator while still a senior at Wagner High School.

"I had an overwhelming desire to join the military," said Whalen. "I wanted to enlist in the active duty right out of high school but my dad asked me about playing college football."

Whalen and his dad discussed his goals further and kept coming back to the National Guard, which would allow him to pursue his long-term goals. "Military, college football and an education," said Whalen. "The National Guard fit the mold. I could serve in the military like I wanted to, and play college football like I wanted to. So it was a perfect fit."

Whalen played two seasons before deploying to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2011, where he served for 13 months with the 842nd. He returned to BHSU in 2013 where he would play another two seasons.

"Coming back from the deployment made football more fun," said Whalen. "There are other things going on in the world and I got to be a part of that. Football didn't seem so serious anymore."

He finished his Yellow Jacket career with 121 receptions for 2,569 receiving yards, scoring 13 touchdowns.

"His ability to come back and finish his career and to eventually get his degree is a testament to his desire and commitment to this University and the BHSU Football Team," said Coach John Reiners. "More than anything...I think the deployment helped develop him as a person. To say it made him a better football player, yeah but

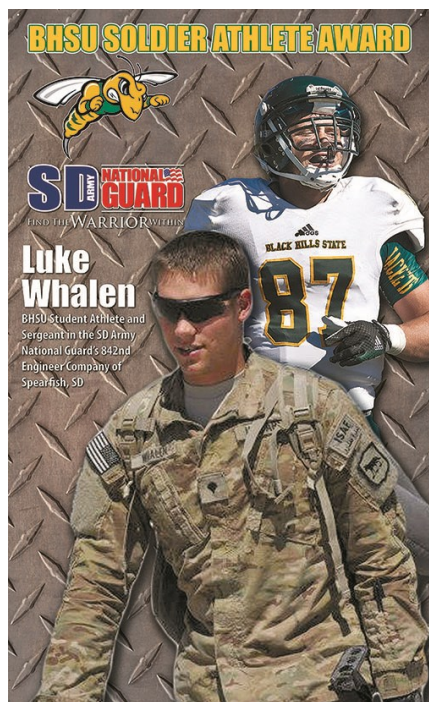
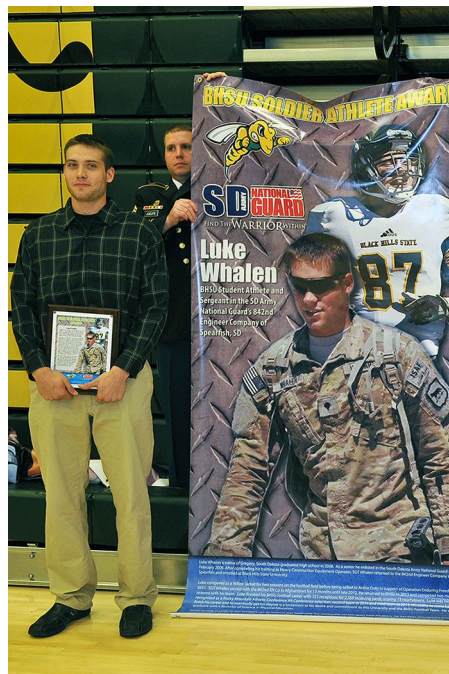
that's so trivial when it comes to the fact that it made him a better person."

Whalen was recognized twice as a Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference All-Conference selection; second team in 2014 and third team in 2013.

He will graduate with a Bachelor of Science in physical education next year.

Whalen said he would recommend the National Guard to other college athletes. "You get the opportunity to use all of these education benefits and go to school, as well as play a sport that you love while serving in the military."

"Both soldiers represent the citizen-soldier and the soldier-athlete well, said Capt. Matthew Sadler, 842nd commander. "We're proud that they've both been able to compete so well at the collegiate level, challenge themselves academically and physically, all while serving their community, state and nation."



82ND CIVIL SUPPORT TEAM VISITS MICHAEL J. FITZMAURICE VETERANS HOME

The 82nd Civil Support Team shared a very special day with our heroes at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home last week.

They displayed their training equipment and provided hands-on training demonstrations to the veterans. But most importantly they took the time to visit one-on-one with the heroes and share stories, as well as listen to their stories.

"I personally am moved to a greater depth of appreciation and compassion for the sacrifices of those generations of veteran's and their spouses," said MAJ Sheets went onto say. "My grandfather was a naval veteran who served in the Atlantic during WWII, escorting and protecting merchant ships and my wife's grandfather was a Piper Cub mechanic who served during the Battle of the Bulge and various other conflicts in Europe and her father served in Viet Nam and died of war-related cancer so I can't help but be mesmerized and indebted for all of their sacrifices. Their stories were absolutely incredible and their service is immeasurable.



MJFVH VOLUNTEERS HONORED

Saturday night, MJFVH Superintendent Brad Richardson had the distinct honor to thank and honor the over 100 volunteers that have dedicated and committed their time to enhance the lives of our heroes at the Veterans Home.

This year these volunteers were recognized for over 7,000 volunteer hours.

"Volunteers are a vital and integral component of our team effort in supporting our heroes and their home! We simply cannot succeed without the thousands of volunteer man-hours," said Superintendent Richardson. "Saying thank you isn't enough, but let me say a heartfelt thank you! Without your commitment and your talents we would not succeed."



GUARDSMEN REACH OUT TO HELP A FELLOW SOLDIER IN NEED

We often hear the term that the 'being part of the National Guard is being part of a family.' This is no truer than when witnessing the efforts of three soldiers in the South Dakota Army National Guard's 147th Forward Support Company in Watertown.

A young soldier, just back from Advanced Individual Training, had no vehicle or other means to travel the nearly 200 miles from his home to Watertown for drill. Recognizing the need, three soldiers from the FSC jumped into action.

Sgt. 1st Class Samuel Schaefer, the FSC readiness NCO, knew of one of his soldiers, Spc. Josh Catron, had a car that he no longer needed. Contacting Catron, he found that he would donate the car free of charge.

With the car lined up, Staff Sgt. Casey Taylor, FSC supply sergeant, checked the vehicle over and fixed a few mechanical issues, ensuring it was road worthy. The car was then given to the soldier after the unit's drill in April.

Schaefer and Taylor went the extra mile by following the soldier on his trip home, just to make sure the vehicle didn't encounter any mechanical problems along the way.

For their efforts, the soldiers were presented a 1-147th Field Artillery Battalion achievement coin by Maj. Jason Warr, the battalion executive officer.

While presenting the coins, Warr spoke of the Army Values and how this act of kindness was a true representation of what the Army Value selfless service is all about.

"We generally have each other's back," said Catron, who has found himself in a similar situation.



"My grandparents once gave me a car that they no longer needed," said Catron. "The car I received from them needed some work, and it probably didn't mean much to them, but it meant a lot to me. I'm happy the car found a good use. It feels good."

"I feel that anyone in my position would do the same thing," said Schaefer. "I'm happy that I was able to help out a young Soldier."

"It felt good to cover down and help someone out," said Taylor. "To see and fill a need."

SD GUARD, SURINAME MILITARY CONDUCT FIELD LEADERSHIP AND HAZMAT EXCHANGE

Members of the South Dakota National Guard and Suriname military participated in a pair of subject matter expert exchanges in April to share information on best practices for field leadership and the handling of hazardous materials.

Three members of the Suriname Defense Force met with more than a dozen SDNG Soldiers and Airmen in Rapid City, April 14 to 17, to discuss procedures and operations for hazmat. The Suriname soldiers visited several units and facilities and discussed protocols and processes for storing, using and disposing of hazmat.

The Surinamers visited the SDNG's warehouse facility, Combined Support Maintenance Shop 2, the 82nd Civil Support Team facility, and Ellsworth Air Force Base's ammunition supply area.

The Suriname soldiers met with active duty Airmen at Ellsworth AFB and received an overview on small-arms ammunition storage. The team discussed ammo issue and return, safety mechanisms, storage and transportation, regulatory and marking requirements, and inventory procedures.

Following the hazmat exchange, three members of the SDNG and 40 members of the Suriname Defense Force conducted an Officer Candidate School field leadership exchange in Suriname, April 22 and 23, focused on troop leading procedures and course instruction.



The SDNG Soldiers observed Suriname's OCS program and how their cadre and candidates conduct training, use resources, give briefings and prepare for operations.

The SDNG team also observed plan development and operation order briefings. They were able to see how the Surinamese disseminate information and how they use sand tables to brief their missions.

SDNG exchange participants, Maj. Steve Sewell and Capt. Chris Long also showed the Suriname candidates another way of setting up their teams when briefing an operation order, to help prevent confusion, and made recommendations on briefing tactics.



The exchanges were conducted as a part of the South Dakota-Suriname State Partnership Program.

In coordination with U.S. Southern Command, Suriname and South Dakota established a successful security cooperation relationship in 2006 under the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program. Since then, numerous exchanges have taken place between South Dakota and Suriname to share experiences and best practices in a variety of military training and topics.

SDDVA HOSTS MINI CONFERENCES

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs hosted Mini-Conferences in Rapid City, Pierre and Sioux Falls this week. Many new and exciting changes are taking place within the VA's claims application process and this is a great opportunity to review these issues with our county and tribal veterans service officers.

SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman, in his opening remarks, thanked the VSOs for their support of Operation RAV and outlined the goals for Operation OK. He also provided updates on legislative session, the new veterans home and the Burn Pit Registry.

Kevin Bowen, State Veterans Field Service Officer for central South Dakota, and Mike Maske, State Veterans Service Officer from the Sioux Falls Claims Office, both an integral parts of SDDVA's team, brought this pertinent and timely information to our network of VSO's.

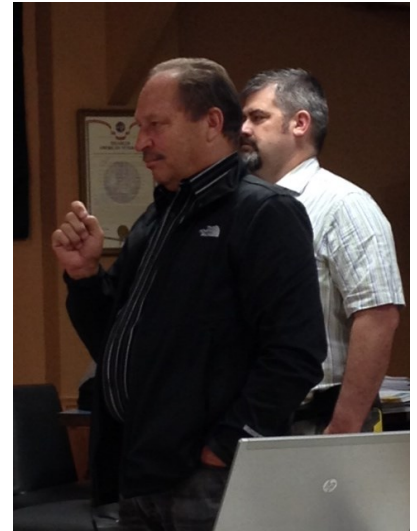
- ♦ Topics reviewed during the conference included:
- ♦ VA's national work queue
- ♦ Standard forms changes and Intent To File (ITF)
- ♦ Vital Records updates
- ♦ Forms of validation for veterans status after July 1, 2015
- ♦ VA's Veterans Choice Cards and the new process
- ♦ South Dakota State Veterans Bonus program
- ♦ VA's elimination of the net worth guideline in applications for VA Health Care
- ♦ VA's SEP computer program and dependency claims processed through SEP
- ♦ The states Vetraspec computer program and applications process
- ♦ VA's new VLER process linking private health care providers to VA electronically
- ♦ Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) claims process including development, application process and exams.

SDDVA continues to utilize our staff in developing and administering the training, which leaves no "stone unturned" so to speak, in the development and application process for VA Benefits. Our network County and Tribal VSO's benefit by having staff from the "field and the VA Regional Office" resolving many questions and issues the VSO's have.

Please note the Benefits School will start at 1:00 pm on Monday, August 24, and conclude by noon on Thursday, August 27. Room reservations can be made by calling the Pierre Ramkota Hotel and asking for the "Veterans Affairs" room block (605-224-6877). Or you can email them to:

reservations@pierreramkota.com and request a room within that same block.

Dates for future benefit schools are as follows:
2016 – August 22-25, 2017 – August 14-17,
2018 – August 27-30, 2019 – August 26-29, and
2020 – August 24-27.



SD GUARDSMAN EARNs HIGHEST HONOR AT LEADERSHIP SCHOOL

A member of the South Dakota National Guard's 82nd Civil Support Team, based out of Ellsworth Air Force Base earned the highest award presented to graduates of the Noncommissioned Officer Academy, at McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base in Tennessee.

The John Levitow Award was presented to Tech. Sgt. Dustin Clement, for achieving the highest overall score based on his academics, performance evaluations and instructor, peer review leadership points. In addition, Clement is a recipient of the Distinguished Graduate Award presented to the top 10 percent of the class.

The award is in honor of John Levitow, the lowest ranking Airman to earn the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions during a flying mission over Long Binh, South Vietnam Feb. 24, 1969.

"I was shocked but at the same time it was a good feeling to know that all my hard work paid



off," said Clement. "As a Guardsman who grew up in a small South Dakota town [Faulkton], I am proud to win this national award."

Clement scored 100 percent on the summative exam, the end of course exam, and was told by his instructor that receiving a perfect score

is rarely accomplished.

"One of the Air Force core values is excellence in all we do," said Clement. "I just wanted to do my best and learn as much as could to improve my leadership skills."

The NCO Academy is a six-week course that further builds upon the leadership skills needed as Airmen progress to mid-career status as noncommissioned officers.

"I learned from my classmates, who have a lot of experience in managing Airmen on a daily basis. I hope we will all keep in contact throughout my career so we can help mentor each other," said Clement.

NATIONAL GUARD UNITS PREPARE FOR REAL-WORLD OPERATIONS

Four hundred South Dakota Army National Guard Soldiers came together for a unique three-day field training exercise, May 1-3, in Sioux Falls.

The exercise brought together 12 units under the command of the 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade for a large-scale, joint operation in a simulated wartime scenario.

"The biggest benefit is being able to bring all the units of the brigade together," said Maj. Troy Ness, assistant operations officer with the MEB. "It gives us a chance to train in a different environment from the armory. In the field we can actually practice our field-craft skills, take our equipment out and set it up, make sure it's serviceable, and practice what we're trained to do."

On the surface, the weekend's mission required Soldiers to restore essential services and civil security to a war-torn fictional country. In reality, it was a test of the 196th's readiness to deploy and establish a vast system of security operations quickly and efficiently. In the space of two days, the 196th erected a tactical operations center housing a powerful computer network capable of coordinating and supporting dozens of operations at once. Supporting battalions then conducted a wide array of operations, one of which was to construct a bridge across an impassable stream.

The 200th Engineer Company deployed the mobile heavy dry-span bridge for the task. The bridge is one of only eight in the nation and is solid enough to bear the weight of any vehicle the Army owns.

On a typical drill weekend, units like the 200th train on their own. Exercises like this take complex, long-term planning. Extended exercises can take up to 18 months to plan and prepare.

The property the 196th used for training belongs to Sioux Falls resident Tom Sweetman. Sweetman allows the SDARNG to train on his land every year, and has done so for the past 15 years. In all the years the SDNG has trained on his property, Sweetman had not visited the training until this year.

The entire exercise was a test run for the 196th's upcoming annual training in Camp Ripley, Minn. There, the tasks performed by the units for three days will be intensified and last two weeks. The exercise culminated in a digitally conducted brigade update brief, which consisted of the unit leaders conducting a full-scale update for the commander using the satellite communications network the Soldiers had linked up during the training.



AIRMEN DEPLOY TO SOUTH KOREA

Approximately 250 Airmen of the South Dakota Air National Guard's 114th Fighter Wing gathered with friends and family for a mobilization ceremony at Joe Foss Field, May 3.

The airmen are deploying to South Korea in support of a rotational Theater Security Package to the region. Rotational TSPs allow the U.S. Air Force to maintain a significant presence within the Pacific Theater.

"It's time to deploy and our leadership is here and ready," said Col. Russ Walz, 114th commander. "Our mission is to support our nation's continued commitment to regional stability and security around the world."

This deployment will provide valuable training opportunities for the 114th and further develop relationships with international partners. While in South Korea, the Airmen will integrate with U.S. and the Republic of Korea Air Force members to fly daily training missions.

It is not only the unit members that contribute to the mission; it is also their families who make a sacrifice.

The 114th will have the opportunity to fulfill the federal side of their two-fold mission: to deploy worldwide and execute directed tactical fighter sorties to destroy enemy forces, supplies, equipment, communications systems and installations with conventional weapons, or when directed by the governor to protect life and property, preserve peace, order and public safety.



Lt. Col. Todd M. Sheridan, 175th Fighter Squadron commander and detachment commander, accepts South Dakota state flag from Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the adjutant general for the SDNG.



DAVISON COUNTY HONORS VOLUNTEERS

This week the Davison County Commissioners wanted honored three Volunteer DAV Drivers for their efforts in transporting veterans to their respective medical appointments.

County Veterans Service Officer Jessica Davidson noted that as of January, Virgil Schoenfelder had totaled more than 1,500 hours of driving since 2003. Volunteers James Hauge and Randall Pratt, each had more than 800 hours of service and have been driving since 2008 and 2010, respectively.

The Commission also discussed the "Needs List" for the Michael J. Fitzmaurice Veterans Home and are setting up donation points within their county.

Davidson has been in contact the surrounding VSO's to see if they would like to partner on this project.



Upcoming Events

May 23—VVA Chapter 959 Agent Orange Town Hall Forum—DAV Chapter 1 House—9:00 am—3:00 pm
May 23—9th Annual Greg Wagner Memorial Event—Alexandria—9:00 am
Jun. 18—SFVAHCS Veterans Town Hall—SFVAHCS Auditorium—5:00 pm
Jun. 18-21—VFW State Convention—Yankton, SD
Jun. 24—Black Hills Job Fair—Western Dakota Tech—Rapid City—12:30—5:00 pm (MT)
Jun.. 25-28—American Legion 97th Annual State Convention—Huron Crossroads Convention Center
Jul. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)
Aug. 5-9—AVTT Traveling Vietnam Wall Comes to Sioux Falls (Sanford Pentagon Sports Complex)
Aug. 24-27—SDDVA Annual Benefit School—Ramkota—Pierre
Sept. 18—POW-MIA Ceremony—Sioux Falls
Oct. 9—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)

DEPLOYMENT CEREMONY SCHEDULED FOR NG UNIT

A deployment ceremony will be held for six Soldiers of the South Dakota Army National Guard's Detachment 48, Operational Support Airlift Command on Wednesday, May 13, at 3 p.m. (MT) at the Army Aviation Support Facility next to Rapid City Regional Airport.

The Rapid City-based unit will deploy to Afghanistan for a year in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

The public is encouraged to attend. Planned speakers for the ceremony include Gov. Dennis Daugaard and Maj. Gen. Tim Reisch, the adjutant general of the SDNG.

Detachment 48 is fixed-wing aviation unit comprised of pilots and operations specialists which operate the C-12 King Air. The unit's primary mission in theater will be providing aerial surveillance in support of ground commanders in the field.

The unit will report to Fort Bliss, Texas, to complete several weeks of theater-specific training prior to deployment overseas. This will be the third mobilization for Det. 48, which deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2008 and 2011-2012.



Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>
Soldiers and Sailors Building
425 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501
Phone: 605-773-8242
E-mail address: audry.ricketts@state.sd.us

